



**Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.
Announces the 2022-23 Patriot's Pen
National Award Winners**

First-place winner Leighton Peters, from Rice Lake, WI, represented the VFW Department of Wisconsin, and was awarded the \$5,000 North End Post 144, Paul A. Spera Past Commander-in-Chief Award.

Second-place winner Nolan Green, from Big Lake, MN, represented the VFW Department of Minnesota, and was awarded the \$4,000 VFW Award.

Third-place winner Makayla Cole, from Blue Springs, MO, represented the VFW Department of Missouri, and was awarded the \$3,500 VFW Award.

Fourth-place winner Elijah Bales, from Waukee, IA, represented the VFW Department of Iowa, and was awarded the \$2,750 Alaine Benson Memorial Award.

Fifth-place winner Grace Garcia, from Kildeer, IL, represented the VFW Department of Illinois, and was awarded the \$2,500 Rehoboth Beach Post 7447 and Auxiliary (Dept. of Delaware) Award.

Sixth-place winner Delaney Uyemura, from Kersey, CO, represented the VFW Department of Colorado, and was awarded the \$2,000 Clyde A. Lewis Department of New York and Auxiliary Award.

Seventh-place winner Avery Hicks, from Kingman, AZ, represented the VFW Department of Arizona, and was awarded the \$1,750 Dept. of New Hampshire George J. Maxfield Post 1772 and Auxiliary John A. Knapper Memorial Award.

Eighth-place winner Victoria Barcey, from Vicenza, Italy, represented the VFW Department of Europe, and was awarded the \$1,500 John F. Gwizdak Award.

Ninth-place winner Ciara Fitzgerald, from Renton, WA, represented the VFW Department of Washington, and was awarded the \$1,500 VFW and James R. and Pat Mueller Award.

Tenth-place winner Haley Justice, from Boiling Springs, SC, represented the VFW Department of South Carolina, and was awarded the \$1,500 VFW Award.

Amaryn Burdette, from Marion, AR, represented the VFW Department of Arkansas, and was awarded the \$1,250 VFW Award.

Ethan Hunt, from Cordova, TN, represented the VFW Department of Tennessee, and was awarded the \$1,250 Grace Minnix Memorial Award.

Lynnlee Merrell, from Glens Ferry, ID, represented the VFW Department of Idaho, and was awarded the \$1,000 Golden Valley VFW Post 7051 (Golden Valley, MN) Award.

Katherine Bruner, from Ambler, PA, represented the VFW Department of Pennsylvania, and was awarded the \$1,000 Louis W. Oppenheim VFW Post 1019 Award.

Isabella Ruta, from Preston, CT, represented the VFW Department of Connecticut, and was awarded the \$1,000 Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Colorado Award.

Dennis Ching, from Needham, MA, represented the VFW Department of Massachusetts, and was awarded the \$1,000 John V. Daniels Jr. Post 2813 and Auxilliary (Department of New York) Award and John E. "Jack" Bales Post 10581 (Department of Colorado) Award.

Olivia Schrider, from Clarksburg, MD, represented the VFW Department of Maryland, and was awarded the \$1,000 Silver Spring Memorial Post 2562 (Department of Maryland) Award and Department of Utah Award (combined).

Peter Smith, from Camp Humphreys, Korea, represented the VFW Department of Pacific Areas, and was awarded the \$1,000 Department of Michigan Award and Warren A. Tressler Memorial (Department of Minnesota) Award (combined).

Jacob Rinehart, from Corinth, MS, represented the VFW Department of Mississippi, and was awarded the \$1,000 Department of Nevada Award & Chaplain Lyman Rollins Post 2005, Marblehead, Massachusetts Award (combined).

Tristen Haddox, from Rio Rancho, NM, represented the VFW Department of New Mexico, and was awarded the \$1,000 Charlie H. Adamson, Jr. Memorial Award and Joseph A. Scerra Memorial (Department of Massachusetts) Award (combined).

Raden Miller, from Saratoga, WY, represented the VFW Department of Wyoming, and was awarded the \$1,000 James L. Keeley Award and Department of Ohio Award (combined).

Magnus Caselli, from Orchard Park, NY, represented the VFW Department of New York, and was awarded the \$1,000 Department of South Dakota VFW and Auxiliary Award & Department of Idaho and Auxiliary Award (combined).

Annora Ferris, from Wells, ME, represented the VFW Department of Maine, and was awarded the \$1,000 Department of Georgia and Auxiliary Award.

Samuel Shevock, from Dover, DE, represented the VFW Department of Delaware, and was awarded the \$750 Department of Kansas VFW and Auxiliary Award and Department of Iowa Award (combined).

Kainoa Thomas, from Kailua, HI, represented the VFW Department of Hawaii, and was awarded the \$750 VFW Department of Washington and Auxiliary Eric G. Sandstrom Memorial Award.

Charlotte Hourdequin, from Hanover, NH, represented the VFW Department of Vermont, and was awarded the \$500 Glenn D. Raney Memorial Award (LA) Award.

Deerak Johnson, from Dolan, SD, represented the VFW Department of South Dakota, and was awarded the \$500 Mary Margaret Romano Memorial (Department of Connecticut) Award.

Trace Dennis, from Imlay City, MI, represented the VFW Department of Michigan, and was awarded the \$500 VFW Southern Conference Award.

Jude Johnson, from Helena, MT, represented the VFW Department of Montana, and was awarded the \$500 Edward S. Banas, Sr. Award.

Nathan Wallin, from Hampton, VA, represented the VFW Department of Virginia, and was awarded the \$500 Deering Memorial Post 6859, Portland, Maine Award.

Katherine Hwang, from Sacramento, CA, represented the VFW Department of California, and was awarded the \$500 Department of Tennessee John Furgess Award.

Annabella Kist, from Alexandria, KY, represented the VFW Department of Kentucky, and was awarded the \$500 Department of Missouri VFW and Auxiliary Award.

Juliana Perrino, from Deland, FL, represented the VFW Department of Florida, and was awarded the \$500 The Robin V. Fell Memorial Award.

Addison Mayfield, from Canyonville, OR, represented the VFW Department of Oregon, and was awarded the \$500 Deering Memorial Post 6859, Auxiliary Portland Maine Award.

Gabrielle Cole, from Madison, AL, represented VFW Department of Alabama, and was awarded the \$500 Department of South Carolina and Auxiliary Award.

Christian Reily, from Oklahoma City, OK, represented the VFW Department of Oklahoma, and was awarded the \$500 Sanford-Springvale Memorial VFW Post 9935 Award.

Greta Rickertsen, from Lexington, NE, represented the VFW Department of Nebraska, and was awarded the \$500 Department of California Award.

Austin Swonger, from Burlington, OK, represented the VFW Department of Kansas, and was awarded the \$500 Department of Arkansas, "Dewayne Fletcher Memorial" Award.

Ginger Gearhart-Bruick, from Angola, IN, represented the VFW Department of Indiana, and was awarded the \$500 Frederick H. Smalley Department of New Mexico Award.

George Hurley III, from Raceland, LA, represented the VFW Department of Louisiana, and was awarded the \$500 VFW Department of Pacific Areas Award.

Emma Wargaski, from Mountainside, NJ, represented the VFW Department of New Jersey, and was awarded the \$500 VFW Department of New Jersey Award.

Gibson Griffith, from Lee, NH, represented the VFW Department of New Hampshire, and was awarded the \$500 Veterans of Foreign Wars of Ohio Charities Award.

Emmett Burns, from Highland, UT, represented the VFW Department of Utah, and was awarded the \$500 Department of Wyoming and Auxiliary Award.

Owen James, from Crab Orchard, WV, represented the VFW Department of West Virginia, and was awarded the \$500 Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Mississippi and Auxiliary Award.

Juliet DeLaRosa, from League City, TX, represented the VFW Department of Texas, and was awarded the \$500 Department of Connecticut and Auxiliary Award.

Anna Sutton, from Swainsboro, GA, represented the VFW Department of Georgia, and was awarded the \$500 Commander-and-Chief John Biedrzewski and 2015-2016 Department Commanders Award.

Marley Pridgen, from Lumberton, NC, represented the VFW Department of North Carolina, and was awarded the \$500 National President Francisca Guilford and 2015-2016 Auxiliaries Award.

Lily Marie Brawner, from Tiverton, RI, represented the VFW Department of Rhode Island, and was awarded the \$500 Department of New Mexico and Auxiliary Award.

Leilani Raymond, from Henderson, NV, represented the VFW Department of Nevada, and was awarded the \$500 VFW Department of Nevada Award.

Tucker Deering, from Oakes, ND, represented the VFW Department of North Dakota, and was awarded the \$500 Department of Pennsylvania 2015-16 "LDRSHIP" Award.

Shaina Brito, from Huber Heights, OH, represented the VFW Department of Ohio, and was awarded the \$500 Peter J. Mascetti Jr. & Department of Europe Award.

Riley Hall, from Chugiak, AK, represented the VFW Department of Alaska, and was awarded the \$500 VFW and Auxiliary members of Southern Charles County Memorial Post 10081, Dept. of Maryland Award.